

*Samuel T. Shaw col
of Am. Pts
1926*

ON FREE PUBLIC EXHIBITION

From Saturday, January 16, Until Time of Sale
Weekdays 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. • Sunday 2 to 5 p.m.

UNRESTRICTED PUBLIC SALE

Evenings of January 21 and 22, at 8:15 O'Clock



Exhibition and Sale at the

AMERICAN ART GALLERIES

MADISON AVENUE • 56th TO 57th STREET

New York City

1926

FOREWORD

THE sale and dispersal of Samuel T. Shaw's collection of pictures will be a milestone, and a very prominent one, on the highway along which American art is steadily advancing. The Shaw collection occupies a place that none other has ever filled, or even attempted to fill, because it consists chiefly of canvases chosen by artists exhibiting in our foremost picture shows, as the best, technically and artistically, among the thousand hung; also because these pictures were done when our American painters had fairly settled into their stride and had given to American art, for the first time, a *cachet* all its own.

Furthermore, Mr. Shaw has gathered and cherished these canvases because of his innate love of the beautiful and his sincere desire to encourage those men about him who are devoting their lives to art here in America, and has not only sympathized with, but put into practice, Whistler's dictum: "The final verdict on the merits of a picture must be that of the artist." The Shaw collection is, and will be of far more interest in the history of American art development than any group of "primitifs,"—which were under the sway of the great school of British portrait painters; furthermore, the influence of the artists here represented will be more widespread and lasting than that of the "colored photograph" Hudson River school, or of all the Düsseldorf gems and *bravura* posings of Munich put together.

The collection is noteworthy for another reason: It marks the epoch of a parting of the ways in American art, and strikingly differentiates the standards of taste between romantic, poetic, and ideal productions, and the now threatened radical movement of realistic rationalism. The artists who painted these canvases were one with us and our environment, and not men living apart, aloof, detached and outside the current of contemporary humanity. There is diversity in the types of men and their output:—Benson, a pioneer of broken, vibrant color; Theodore Robinson, our first impressionist, and with him Twachtman, Ochtman and Hassam; Prof. Weir and Wm. M. Chase, eminent teachers; Wiggins and McIlhenny, the virile animal painters; H. O. Walker and his appealing treatment of youth; Wyant, atmospheric, his pictures like the note of the hermit thrush in a deep wood; Metcalf and Redfield, portrait painters of nature; Murphy and Ranger, the

twain who so long dominated landscape in the realm of art; McCord, Crane and Granville Smith, imbued with sentiment of sea and sky; Gay, Volk, C. Ryder, H. Nichols, Curran, De Haven,—but why go on when their canvases speak so eloquently?

Clever was the French critic who said:—"Criticism of one's contemporaries ceases to be criticism and becomes conversation."

And he who has made this collection, Mr. Shaw, combines in himself qualities very rarely found united in one individual, for he was an art student in youth and early manhood; indeed, in its widest sense he is one to-day, a steadfast patron of art, a connoisseur of Catholic taste and, fortunately, never limited to considerations of how much should be expended whenever faced by the question of buying pictures or giving prizes. And here it must be recalled that the first Shaw Prize was given to encourage figure painting in order to combat the idea then prevailing that landscapes were the American's only field.

The ultimate fate of all collections seems finally to bring them under the hammer, and more than twenty years ago it was prophesied that "a collection of such extraordinary merit as Mr. Shaw's and one made under such extraordinary circumstances if disposed of would prove more profitable than any collection chosen for 'safe investment.'"

Unabated enthusiasm and timely encouragement attended every acquisition of these American pictures, and, hand in hand with them, came generosity and judgment.

LEIGH HUNT.

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